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FEBRUARY 2023

FIRST LOOK

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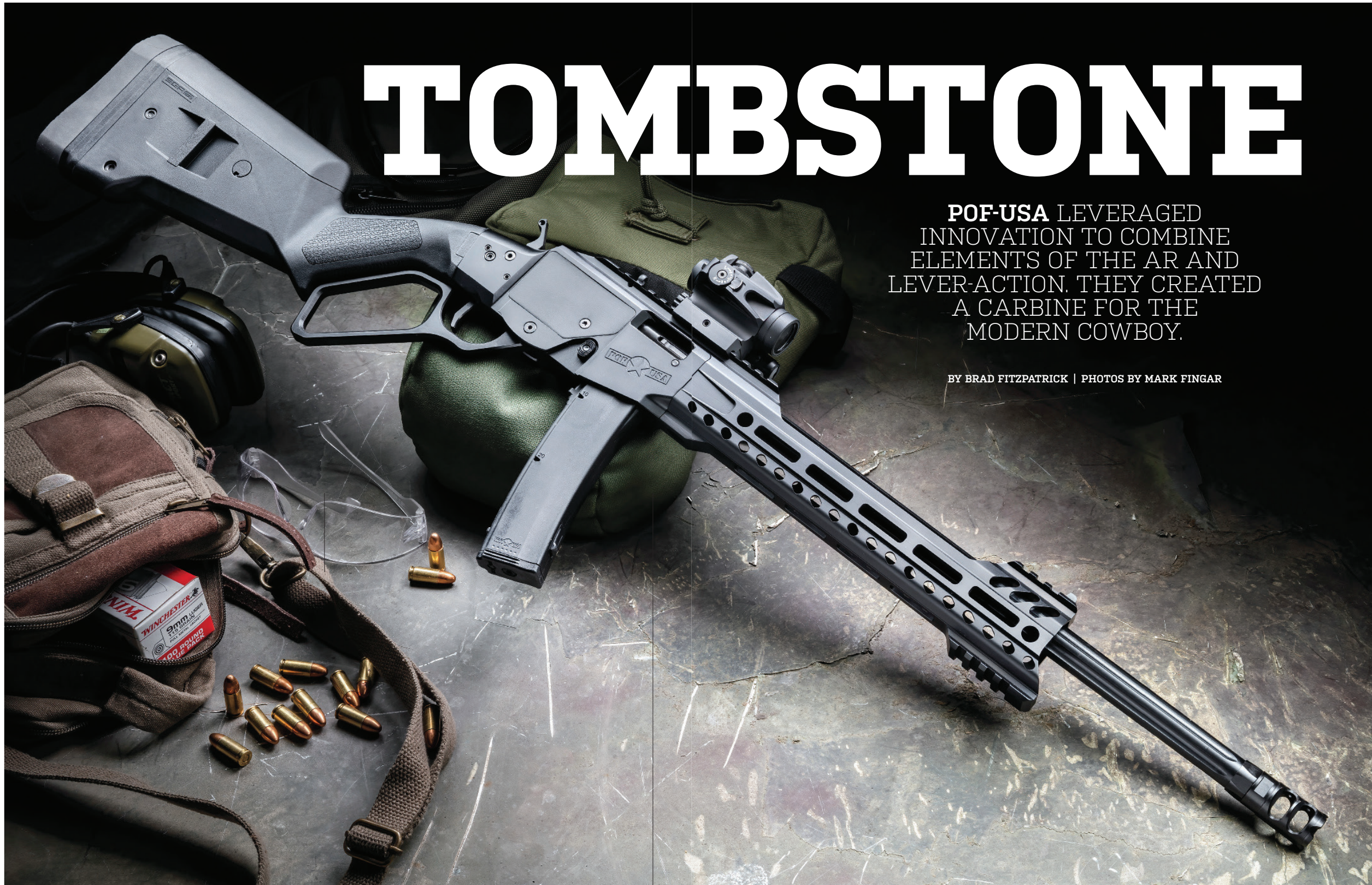
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# TOMBSTONE

**POF-USA** LEVERAGED INNOVATION TO COMBINE ELEMENTS OF THE AR AND LEVER-ACTION. THEY CREATED A CARBINE FOR THE MODERN COWBOY.

BY BRAD FITZPATRICK | PHOTOS BY MARK FINGAR





The Magpul SGA stock offers a flush sling mount on both sides. The stock with rubber pad only weighs 1½ pounds.



Removing the Tombstone's side plates exposes the unique linkage assembly. As the lever is pulled down, the linkage unlocks the bolt and pulls it rearward.

**MOST SHOOTERS** are familiar with Patriot Ordnance Factory's (POF) extensive line of clever "AR-ish" rifles and pistols, but the Arizona-based company has stepped out of the "Black Gun" box. Perhaps it started in 2022 with the release of the Phoenix 9mm semiautomatic pistol. While that gun wasn't much of a reach for a company that made its name inventing ARs and AR components, the Tombstone levergun is a radical departure for POF-USA.



The bolt contains the firing pin within, an external extractor and a groove that allows the fixed ejector to pass through.



Unlike most lever actions, the Tombstone feeds from detachable magazines, the same used by the POF Phoenix pistol.

Boiled down to the most basic term, the Tombstone is a "lever-action rifle." However, that assessment seems out of place at first glance. Where's the wood? Where's the bluing or color-case hardening? The image of a traditional Winchester or Henry hardly applies to the Tombstone. It looks more like the result of a tryst between a Winchester 92 and the 9mm POF Phoenix, but if you look a little closer, you'll realize that the Tombstone is a gun that can stand alone. In fact, it may be a little ahead of its time.

#### BUILT TO BLAST, BUILT TO LAST

I spoke with Jeremy Selting, Patriot Ordnance Factory's vice president of sales and marketing. He confirmed what I suspected; the Tombstone was POF's attempt to go outside

of the company's current audience and create a gun that would broaden the brand's footprint. What I didn't anticipate was learning just how much thought and engineering went into the development and release of this model.

"We wanted to do something radically different," Selting said. "The inspiration came from custom lever-guns that could be outfitted with modern features such as M-Lok forearms, rails, modern stocks and threaded muzzles. POF was already building guns with those features, so why not create a lever-action with the most desirable accessories already in place?"

The accessory list began with a Magpul SGA stock,

which was developed for the Mossberg 500/590/590A1 and Remington 870 12-gauge shotguns. In my opinion, Magpul's SGA stock offered these classic American shotguns a level of versatility not found with other polymer stocks. The comb and length-of-pull (LOP) adjustments allow the user to fit the gun to the shooter and optical system, which has different ergonomics for sighting than a bolt-action rifle or AR-15. The recoil pad was designed to be comfortable and absorb recoil, too. Admittedly, recoil mitigation isn't a serious concern when shooting a 9mm carbine, but it made evaluating the Tombstone more pleasant. As with Magpul's other stocks, the SGA includes 1¼-inch (thread-type) sling attachment points molded into both sides of the stock,

convenience for both right- and left-handed shooters.

The Tombstone's action is a new piece of engineering, though, and it is unique to POF. Many of the key features are familiar to other leverguns, as well. For example, as the bolt moves rearward with the downstroke of the lever, the exposed hammer is cocked. On the return stroke, the bolt lifts a cartridge to position it for feeding into the chamber. What's different is that, unlike other lever-action rifles, the Tombstone feeds from a proprietary detachable magazine. (It's the same magazine that is used to feed the Phoenix 9mm semiauto pistol.) These magazines function using a single-feed, double-stack layout with a curved body for the natural stacking of rounds. Translation? These magazines are reliable. They're available in 10-, 20- and 35-round



For inspections or maintenance, G&A recommends leaving one side plate in place to keep the linkage assembly intact.



The crossbolt safety can be engaged when the hammer is placed in a half- or full-cock position.



The magazine release is intuitive for users of the AR-15, however, the magazine is locked into place by a rear tab.

varieties. Spares cost between \$27 and \$36 at [pof-usa.com](http://pof-usa.com). A 20-round magazine comes standard with the Tombstone unless local laws restrict buyers to the 10-round version.

"When we released the Phoenix," said Selting, "many buyers wanted to know why we didn't use an available magazine."

Though they couldn't relate it at the time, the reason was that POF had plans for using that magazine in this new platform.

The aluminum receiver comes with sideplates that are removable with a T15 Torx driver; inside you'll find the linkage assembly. Selting told me that POF didn't intend for owners to remove the sideplates, but it does make it easier to access the linkage should someone need to quickly clean the gun or resolve any mechanical issues. Guns & Ammo's test gun arrived to me from photographer



Working the lever enhances the operation of the Tombstone. It also made shooting each round deliberate.

Mark Fingar's office, who is quite familiar with disassembling guns. Fingar called and recommended that I not remove the sideplate unless the opposite sideplate was held in place. This is to keep the linkage components intact, which proved to be good advice. If you're going to remove the sideplate, I suggest you do the same and support the opposite side of the gun so that all the parts remain in place. If you're careful, removing the sideplate allows you to see how the interior mechanics of the gun operate, transferring energy from the lever to the bolt.

The bolt includes the Tombstone's firing pin and extractor; the extractor is on the bolt. Opposite is also a slot for the ejector to pass through, which is attached to the interior receiver wall. When a cartridge case is pulled rearward, it strikes the fixed ejector and

drives the case from the extractor's clutches and out the action's opening.

Many modern lever actions feature a manual safety, and so does this. The Tombstone has a crossbolt safety at the rear of the receiver. Pressing it to the left disengages the safety. The safety operates when the exposed hammer is cocked, and the hammer has a half-cock position for added safety. There's also a threaded hole in the hammer spur for installing a thumb extension, which improves hammer control and simplifies



More akin to the AR-15, the Tombstone features a fluted, free-floating barrel with a 1/2-28 threaded muzzle. It comes with a removable, dual-port muzzlebrake.



The Tombstone offers plenty of M-Lok attach points and mounting rail for installing lights, lasers, slings and other accessories. Few lever actions are this configurable.

the gun's operation with an optic mounted. Aside from the safety, the only other control on the rifle is the magazine release, which is an ambidextrous, AR-style push button located on the right side of the receiver; an ambi lever is on the left.

The action lever is large enough to accommodate gloved hands, and it's beveled for comfort. Engineers at POF spent time smoothing the lever's stroke, so unlike a few other modern leverguns the Tombstone's stroke is consistent, smooth, and relatively light. Even shooters with minimal hand strength should be able to operate it without trouble; there's little resistance through the sequence.

During my interview, Selting was quick to point out that one component of the Tombstone that received a lot of engineering's attention was the trigger. Lever-action rifles aren't known for having great triggers, and even some expensive leverguns have heavy, uneven trigger pulls. This isn't so with the Tombstone. The flat-face trigger design is comfortable to press and easy to manage. The gun fires after about 3½ pounds of pressure according to the readout on my Wheeler trigger gauge; that measurement was right in line with the manufacturer's specification. The trigger is

predictable and, while it isn't as clean POF's drop-in triggers for AR rifles, it's still as good as most triggers we've tested on other leverguns.

The action is mated to a 16½-inch, fluted, free-floated barrel made from 4150 steel. The barrel is complete with a 1/2x28 threaded muzzle for attaching muzzle devices, including a suppressor. However, a dual-port muzzlebrake is included with the Tombstone. You can easily remove it. Selting said suppressing it makes this gun even more fun to shoot. (I agree.)

Surrounding the barrel is POF's 10½-inch Modular Receiver Rail (MRR). Of course, it has M-Lok attachment points at the 3, 6 and 9 o'clock positions, as well as 2-inch Picatinny rail sections at 12 and 6 o'clock. There's a section of rail above the receiver, and XS Ghost Ring sights are standard features.

#### AT THE RANGE

With a reflex sight mounted, and a few boxes of 9mm ammunition, I went to a local shooting range to get a feel for the carbine. The Tombstone is a light rifle, weighing just 5¾ pounds unloaded. With its short barrel, it measured right at 36-inches overall. It was handy, well-balanced, and low recoiling. Working the lever



XS Sights' Ghost Ring sights are standard. While the post-aperture makes for a familiar sight setup, an optic works great, too.

will encourage you to shoot through ammo in a hurry, though, and it'll do it quite accurately. Actually, it was more accurate than we see with most 9mm pistols. At 25 yards, set up with a reflex sight, I punched groups at 25 yards and managed baseball-sized five-shot clusters while standing. Accuracy testing was conducted at 50 yards, though, from a fixed rest, and the results were impressive for a 9mm carbine.

The best groups measured less than 2 inches, which is what you might expect from a quality 9mm pistol at half that distance. Muzzle velocities ranged from 1,100 to over 1,300 feet per second (fps), which confirmed that the lengthened barrel offers a little more velocity than a 9mm handgun. Reliability was good overall, too.

That said, I experienced three failures due to rounds not fully chambering. Relieving the pressure on the lever slightly — but not so much to cause a double feed — fixed the problem. Additionally, one cartridge case fell back into the action after its ejection. (I had the rifle turned almost 90 degrees to the left.) Those issues occurred while I was trying to test the Tombstone from the bench. There were no issues when I was shooting offhand.



### PRACTICAL APPEAL

The accuracy results, capacity, and added velocity beg an obvious question: Is the Tombstone a suitable self-defense carbine? Yes! Though it's longer and heavier than a 9mm handgun, the Tombstone would make a superb home-defense gun. With all the M-Lok attachments and rail space, there is plenty of room for mounting an optic, light or laser and, with a bit of practice, you'll find that this gun is easy to shoot quickly. There's minimal muzzle rise, so I would imagine that most of your friends and family could shoot the Tombstone more accurately and faster than they could a 9mm pistol. It's also very simple to operate. Many shooters, especially older shooters who may lack the hand

### PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VEL. (FPS)	ES	SD	BEST GROUP (IN.)	AVG. GROUP (IN.)
Federal Syntech PCC 130-gr. JFN	1,138	22	8	1.9	2.3
Hornady Crit. Defense 115-gr. FTX	1,333	35	11	2	2.2
Federal Solid Core 147-gr. Solid	1,348	25	9	2.5	2.8
CCi Blazer 115-gr. FMJ	1,347	32	10	2.7	3
Browning BPT 147-gr. FMJ	1,137	51	15	3	3.5

Notes: Accuracy results are average of five, five-shot groups at 50 yards from a bench rest. Velocity figures are 10-shot averages recorded by Labrador adjacent the muzzle.

strength to manipulate a semiautomatic slide, for example, may even find the Tombstone a practical option for personal protection; there's no slide to operate as on a pistol. With the Tombstone's available magazine capacities, it's less likely that inexperienced shooters would have to deal with reloading in most self-defense situations. If you can run a 20- or 35-round magazine, you'll "load on Sunday and shoot all week," as the saying goes.

There are other practical applications for this rifle. It's small enough to qualify as a truck gun and would make sense for those who carry a rifle on an ATV/UTV. It's always a good idea to carry a firearm for personal protection where legal to do so; the lightweight and compact Tombstone would serve well as a constant companion that tucks neatly out of the way when not needed.

### POF-USA TOMBSTONE

TYPE	Lever action
CARTRIDGE	9mm
CAPACITY	10, 20 or 35 rds.
BARREL	16.5 inch, 1:10-in. twist, 4150 steel, muzzlebrake
OVERALL LENGTH	36 in.
WEIGHT	7 lbs.
HANDGUARD	POF M.R.R., 10.5 in., M-Lok
STOCK	Magpul SGA, black
FINISH	Melonite (steel), black anodized (aluminum)
TRIGGER	Single stage, 3 lbs., 8 oz. (tested)
SIGHTS	XS Sights Ghost Ring WS
SAFETY	Internal, passive; half-cock hammer
MSRP	\$1,962
MANUFACTURER	POF-USA, pof-usa.com

Campers and survivalists will no doubt appreciate POF Tombstone 9mm lever action. Easy to carry, it is suitable for self-defense in the home, protection on the trail, and accurate enough to take small game for the pot or control pests. The Tombstone also serves a practical but oft forgotten role of a "garden gun." A century ago, garden guns, which were designed to be loaded with shot to dispatch vermin in and around the home were quite popular. Loaded with CCi's Pest Control 9mm load featuring #12 shot, the Tombstone would be a great stand-in for the garden guns of yore.

All this discussion of the Tombstone's practical applications shouldn't distract from the fact that it is simply fun to shoot. If you come to own this carbine, you'll want to take it to the range at every opportunity. Youngsters, and those who are recoil sensitive, will have a hoot cracking clay targets, and you know the clack of ringing steel with 9mm never gets old. If you can replace the muzzlebrake with a suppressor, the fun factor increases exponentially for all.

POF-USA set out to reimagine the traditional lever gun. Mission accomplished. Engineered and built in America, this rifle blends the best features from the legendary Winchester and the AR-15 to arrive at a lever-gun for the 21st century. 